



# Staff Action in a SASO Environment



# Agenda

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- **Defining the Problem**
- **Staff Roles and Responsibilities**
- **Intelligence**
- **Where does the CA element fit?**
- **Logistics - CV or COG**



# Agenda

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- **The limitations of infantry battalion C2**
- **A process approach to solutions**
- **Everyone has an agenda... including us**



# Agenda

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- **Daily, weekly, and monthly Battle Rhythm**
- **Inputs and outputs**
- **Creating reality**
- **“Fires” in a SASO context**
- **“Killing a mosquito with a baseball bat”**
- **Conclusion and questions**



# Defining the Problem

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- **SASO in Iraq is Fourth Generation Warfare:**
  - **No front, rear, or flanks.**
  - **No clearly distinct enemy, friendly, or neutral forces.**
  - **The predisposition of the population is to remain neutral or opportunistic.**
  - **Complex terrain precludes establishment of contiguous frontages.**



# Defining the Problem

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- **The enemy's advantage:**
  - **Relative combat power supremacy in a battalion's AOR does not imply relative combat power advantage at the point of attack.**
  - **Initiative starts with the enemy - if he is allowed to keep it, then he gets to choose the time and place of your next mass casualty drill.**



# Defining the Problem

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- **The enemy's advantage:**
  - **To untutored eyes, every Iraqi looks the same (even those that aren't really Iraqis).**
  - **The volume of information influx will overwhelm a battalion S-2's ability to process, produce, and disseminate intelligence**



# Defining the Problem

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- **The enemy's advantage:**
  - **“Man bites dog.” The news media's institutional skepticism of the military and the reporters' professional and financial need to grab headlines will cause a slant towards “resistance movements.”**
  - **The enemy begins with the advantage in the hearts and minds of the population. They will forgive his terror while blaming us for atrocities real or imaginary.**





# Defining the Problem

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- **Operational and Strategic tasks for Tactical level units.**
  - **Security operations in SASO mean something entirely different than their MCRP 5-2A definition.**
  - **Security is a perception that must be created in the minds of the enemy, your HHQ, the local population, and the news media. This cannot be done by tactical actions alone.**



# Defining the Problem

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- **Operational and Strategic tasks for Tactical level units.**
  - **Rifle units patrolling the streets can, at most, maintain the status quo by day-to-day, near-perfect infantry execution, over the span of the entire deployment.**
  - **Rifle units can lose the security battle with one sufficiently spectacular mistake.**
  - **Over-control from the battalion or higher level is sure to hasten that mistake.**



# Defining the Problem

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- **Some gross generalizations about the Iraqi population.**
  - **There is no truth in Iraq, only shades of grey.**
  - **He is not lying to you, he is negotiating about what you should know.**
  - **The man that is talking is never the most important man.**



# Defining the Problem

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- **Some gross generalizations about the Iraqi population.**
  - **The group is more important than the individual - if you do not know what ethnic group, tribe, clan, family, neighborhood, sect, or mosque the man belongs to, you cannot understand the context of what he is saying.**
  - **Only bad things happen quickly.**



# Defining the Problem

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- **Some gross generalizations about the Iraqi population.**
  - **Bluster and deliberately dramatic or insulting speech is a manner of communicating position.**
  - **The Iraqi Thomas Jefferson is not suddenly going to show up on your doorstep.**



# Defining the Problem

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- **The limited utility of force.**
  - **Taking direct action can often be as counter-productive as it is tempting.**
  - **Shrewd negotiation can be more effective than accurate fires.**
  - **Be sure that you capture or kill the right people - you won't get a chance to "make things right."**



# Defining the Problem

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- **The limited utility of force.**
  - **The enemy's goal is to harass your Marines into over-reacting.**
  - **Under-reacting is just as bad as over-reacting**
  - **Over control may seem to initially solve the severity of reaction problem - this is a dangerous illusion!**



# Defining the Problem

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- **The limited utility of force.**
  - **A guerilla casualty is a martyr or a victim of American brutality.**
  - **A Marine casualty is a vindication of terrorist strength and your impotence.**
  - **A non-combatant casualty is always your fault.**
  - **Regardless of whose casualties they are, the news media will paint your involvement in the worst possible light.**





# Defining the Problem

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- **The limited utility of force.**
  - **Pick you poison carefully and strike hard and fast once the decision is made because you are going to have use force.**



# Defining the Problem

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- **The enemy**
  - **What T. E. Lawrence knew.**
  - **A jihadi that has decided to die cannot be deterred, he can only be killed or pre-empted.**
  - **The Ba'athists have no way out except to keep fighting... but they are not suicidal.**
  - **Some criminals kill because they are sociopaths. Most kill because they are being paid.**



# Defining the Problem

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- **The enemy**
  - **Iran believes that time is on the side of the Ayatollahs.**
  - **Syria's Ba'athists hated Saddam, but they hate you more... and they have money.**
  - **The Saudi and Kuwaiti border may be the Laos and Cambodia of this war.**



# Defining the Problem

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- **With friends like these...**
  - **The vast majority of US Army Soldiers are not riflemen first, but every US Army convoy is an HPT for the enemy.**
  - **SOF and OGA have missions in your zone - what you don't know can hurt you.**
  - **US Army CA have insufficient experience and organizational skill to do what you consider to be their job.**



# Defining the Problem

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- **With friends like these...**
  - **HHQ will invent seemingly irrelevant reports and assign incomprehensible taskers at the worst possible time.**
  - **US VIPs have absolutely no idea how hard your job is...**
  - **US journalists are not looking to make you look good for “the folks back home.” The interview started at “hello,” and you are that reporter’s paycheck.**



# Defining the Problem

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- **With friends like these...**
  - **The Iraqi police force is the same as police forces in the rest of the Arab world - if you don't make them to their job, no one will.**
  - **Today's friendly Sheikh is potentially tomorrows guerilla chieftain.**
  - **NGO's honestly believe that you are the problem.**



# Defining the Problem

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- **With all of the above said, because you are the single most powerful force in your AOR, you can become your own worst enemy.**



# **Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

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- **The Battalion Staff must find an efficient way to balance a fire hose of information, HHQ directives, and reconstruction tasks while focusing its tactical units on stabilizing and securing the AOR.**
- **The staff must avoid the trap of considering SASO defensive operations.**





# **Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

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- **SASO are offensive in nature. The required tasks are:**
  - **Deny the enemy freedom of movement with an aggressive, unpredictable patrolling scheme.**
  - **Deny the enemy the initiative by turning his favored tactics (convoy ambush and fixed site bombing) against him.**



# **Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

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- **SASO are offensive in nature. The required tasks are:**
  - **Separate the enemy from the population by aggressive, targeted use of CA, reconstruction actions, and information operations.**
  - **Determine the operating bases of guerilla cells in the AOR by accurate and timely intelligence.**



# **Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

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- **SASO are offensive in nature. The required tasks are:**
  - **Destroy the enemy by using the exact amount of force required for the task.**
  - **Ensure that the perception of a secure environment is reinforced with the local population, the news media, and HHQ.**



# Intelligence

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- **The volume of information will overwhelm a T/O Battalion S-2.**
  - **Information inputs come from company patrol reports, CIRs, SIGINT reports, CSS convoy debriefs, CA action officer reports, higher headquarters, and “walk-in” traffic.**
  - **A system must be constructed that allows analysis by volume, group, connection, area, and interests.**



# Intelligence

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- **Volume analysis allows for the identification of trends. Items susceptible to trend analysis include**
  - **Graffiti by city area.**
  - **Call to prayer messages by mosque.**
  - **Response to Marine patrols by neighborhood.**
  - **Statements by a specific group about the coalition or another group.**
  - **Enemy contact by area.**



# Intelligence

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- **The goal of volume analysis is to first measure how friendly actions affect certain trends.**
- **The affect of certain friendly actions on measurable trends can be used as one aspect of measures of effectiveness or as one element of predictive analysis.**
- **Because numbers tell only part of the story, it is important to not fall in love with this process.**



# Intelligence

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- **Group to group and person to person analysis allows tracking of relationships between individuals, families, neighborhoods, clans, tribes, mosques, sects, etc.**
- **This builds an understanding of relationships.**
- **Over time, the goal is to conduct predictive analysis of how friendly actions will affect relationships between certain groups or how certain groups will react to specific friendly actions.**



# **Where Does the CA element fit**

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- **Do not assume that Army NG Civil Affairs understands how to organize your CA effort.**
- **You are neither the Peace Corps in uniform nor big brother.**
- **PsyOps has great gear that they don't know how to use.**
- **No one gets something for nothing.**





# **Where Does the CA element fit**

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- **CA is to SASO as fire support is to combat operations. If you leave fire support planning to fire supporters, you will not get effects in conjunction with maneuver. The same goes for CA.**
- **CA supports to Commander's Intent. Every CA "target" must have a task and a purpose.**



# **Where Does the CA element fit**

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- **CA must be integrated into the daily battle rhythm and made answerable to the battalion staff.**
- **CA is a key intelligence collection agency. They must file reports (they really don't like this).**
- **All CA personnel movements must be coordinated through the S-3.**



# **Logistics - CV or COG**

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- **You will have to convoy support items. It may even be your primary mission.**
- **The enemy believes that it is most efficient to kill Americans in vehicles - the casualty figures bear this out.**
- **Support Marines have to be able to competently carry out offensive actions.**



# **Logistics - CV or COG**

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- **Your H&S Marines form your lowest density, most vulnerable, least replaceable assets - train them to fight or suffer the consequences.**
- **Massive Army convoys will cross your battlespace with no coordination. They are just the kind of HPT the enemy is looking for.**



# **Logistics - CV or COG**

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- **Contracting logistics requirements to local companies kills two birds with one stone.**
- **Make HHQ understand your Log Stat. If they don't you won't be supported. Emergency Rapid Requests result in unscheduled convoys through your AO.**



# **Limitations of Infantry Battalion C2**

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- **The only organic long range communications asset you have is HF. How good is LCpl Jones at HF?**
- **VHF/SINCGARS experiences challenges in built up terrain.**
- **E-mail, DSN, and Iridium are a mixed blessing - you hate them, but you can't operate without them.**



# **Limitations of Infantry Battalion C2**

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- **Even with Iridium, once an element departs line of sight range, you cannot provide effective control.**
- **Ensure that every unit tasked to operate out of LOS can function on mission-type orders.**



# **Limitations of Infantry Battalion C2**

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- **Your staff is small and (mostly) one deep.**
- **You cannot possibly get everything done - determine that which is important. Get it done. Take care of everything else when you get a chance.**
- **Make sure that what you decided is unimportant actually is.**





# **A Process Approach to Solutions**

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- **No matter how big the hammer, you are not going to fix Iraq... but you can make it worse.**
- **Every day that you AO sees net improvement represents a step towards defeating the enemy.**
- **Getting the story out is almost as import as making actual progress.**



# **A Process Approach to Solutions**

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- **Develop a POA&M and stick to it - review you plan and progress to ensure that you are keeping to the Commander's Intent.**
- **Do not assume that an absence of negative activity is a good thing.**



# **Everyone Has an Agenda - Including us**



- **We are in Iraq in support of our National Policy Goals - we are not in Iraq to “make the world safe for democracy.”**
- **Each Iraqi represents interests that include him, his family, his mosque, his tribe, and his ethnic group.**
- **Third parties have their own agenda.**



# **Everyone Has an Agenda - Including us**



- **Understanding agenda will go a long way to ensuring well thought-out decisions.**



# Questions

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